

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PANAMA 03258 032223Z

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4078

INFO USSOUTHCOM

PANCANAL

CONFIDENTIAL PANAMA 3258

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ETEL PN

SUBJECT: TELECOMMUNICATIONS: INTEL MANAGEMENT CHANGE MAY DELAY

TRT NEGOTIATIONS

REF: A. PANAMA 3231 B. PANAMA 1934

1. LT. COL. MANUEL J. ARAUZ, DIRECTOR OF TRAFFIC POLICE,
HAS BEEN APPOINTED NEW CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF GOVERNMENT'S TELECOMMUNICA-
TIONS ENTITY (INTEL) TO REPLACE LT. COL. (RET) LUIS SEGURA, ARRESTED
IN REAL ESTATE KICK-BACK SCANDAL REPORTED REF A. ARAUZ REPORTEDLY
WILL CONTINUE TO SERVE ALSO AS TRAFFIC POLICE DIRECTOR AT LEAST
TEMPORARILY, WHICH HAS LEAD TO SPECULATION THAT HIS DIRECTORSHIP
OF INTEL MAY ONLY BE TEMPORARY.

2. CHANGE IN MANAGEMENT IS LIKELY TO DELAY CURRENT PHASE OF NEGOTIA-
TIONS BETWEEN INTEL AND TRT TELECOMMUNICATIONS CORPORATION FOR SALE OF

LATTER'S FACILITIES IN PANAMA. TRT HAS BEEN CONSIDERING COUNTEROFFER
WHICH INTEL MADE IN APRIL (REF B), BUT LOCAL TRT MANAGER (BARRIOS)
INFORMED EMBOFF THAT COMPANY NOW IS NOT SURE THAT NEW INTEL MANAGE-
MENT WILL ABIDE BY MOST RECENT INTEL PROPOSAL. BARRIOS INDICATED
THAT IN SPITE OF CONTINUING DIFFICULTIES IN GETTING LINES FROM INTEL
TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL SERVICE TO CUSTOMERS, ANY DELAY IN TALKS WILL
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PAGE 02 PANAMA 03258 032223Z

NOT DISPLEASE TRT, AS INITIATIVE FOR SALE WAS COMPLETELY ON PART

OF INTEL. HE SAID THERE WERE NO NEW DEVELOPMENTS REGARDING TRT'S TAX PROBLEM WITH THE GOP.

3. EMBASSY ALSO INFORMED THAT TENTATIVE AGREEMENT ON A DIVISION OF INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS TRAFFIC HAD BEEN REACHED BETWEEN INTEL AND INTERCOMSA, THE PRIVATE PANAMANIAN FIRM WITH COMSAT MINORITY INTEREST WHICH OWNS THE LOCAL COMMUNICATIONS SATELLITE GROUND STATION. FOLLOWING INTEL TAKE-OVER OF TRT, ARRANGEMENT REPORTEDLY WOULD ALLOCATE INTERNATIONAL TELEPHONE TRAFFIC TO INTERCOMSA AND MESSAGE TRAFFIC TO INTEL. THIS PROPOSED SCHEME COULD ALSO BE PUT IN QUESTION BY CHANGE AT INTEL.

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